

CD 2001--125/126

Friday, December 7, 2001, 8 p.m.
Walter Hall

Faculty Artist Series
Presents

Shauna Rolston, cello
Scott St. John, violin
Lydia Wong, piano

PROGRAMME

Bohuslav Martinù
(1890-1959)

Sonata for Cello and Piano No.3
Poco andante - Moderato
Allegro ma non agitato
Finale - Presto

Sonata for Violin and Piano No.1 (1930)
Espressivo, allegro
Andante
Allegretto

INTERMISSION

Bedřich Smetana
(1824-1884)

Piano Trio in G minor, op.15
Poco andante
Andante
Allegro (ma non presto)

Tonight's programme is performed on the Edith McConica Steinway.

A portion of the ticket revenues from the Faculty Artist Series support the Faculty Artists' Scholarship awarded annually on the basis of financial need to the most outstanding student continuing full-time studies in an undergraduate programme.

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Programme Notes

Cello Sonata No. 3

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ

Born in Policka, Bohemia, 1890

Died in Liestal, Switzerland, 1959

Bohemian composer Bohuslav Martinů is an interesting figure in the history of twentieth-century music, insofar as he numbers among the few modern composers who composed a large amount of music in virtually every genre. Martinů's oeuvre includes everything from symphonic works to music for a variety of chamber ensembles; from operas to solo songs. His music reveals diverse influences, including both Modernist and Renaissance music, Eastern European composers such as Dvořák and Janáček, and also bears the imprint of the Jazz of the 1920s.

This sonata for cello and piano was composed in 1952, a busy year for Martinů in which he completed many works, including two large operas. Martinů composed this sonata in only three weeks, a reflection of his prolificacy. It is also a reflection of his tendency towards what Brian Large has called Martinů's "progressive tonality"—the use of chromatically altered harmonies, polytonality, modes and whole tone scales, framed between tonal beginnings and endings and underpinned with stabilising devices like ostinatos and pedal points. Harmonically, this sonata has moments of tonal ambiguity and instability, with frequent modulations; however, the work is ultimately tonal, with a typical confirmation of key in the final measures. Notable in this work are the use of long, sustained pedal points, Martinů's adroit idiomatic writing for the cello, and the well-structured, inventive melodies.

Martinů composed this sonata while in "exile" in the United States: he fled Paris in 1940 as the Nazi's, who had blacklisted his music, approached the city. Martinů was forced to remain in the United States into the 1950s due to health problems, and his homesickness for his native Bohemia is said to have been a strong influence on all three of his cello sonatas.

Notes by Alex Carpenter

Violin Sonata No. 1

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ

Musical life in Paris was astonishingly multifarious in the early twentieth century, nourished by musicians of many different nationalities and aesthetic persuasions - romantics, impressionists, modernists, neoclassicists, scholars, conservatory types, pioneers of the early-music movement, and "exotic" national styles.

In Bohuslav Martinů's *Sonata for violin and piano*, of 1930, the "exotic" element is American. In the aftermath of the First World War, Parisians were drawn to the freshness, vitality, and spontaneity of American culture. Jazz and other American music could be heard in cabarets, music and dance halls, cinemas, and elsewhere throughout the twenties and thirties, and many American jazz performers found more appreciation for their art (and greater racial tolerance) in Paris than at home. Classical composers were energized by contact with American music; when George Gershwin visited Paris in 1928, hoping to study "serious" composition, he found that the local composers (like Ravel) were more interested in learning from him. Martinů lived in Paris from 1923 to 1940, and fell in love with the city's culture and social life. From the "blue" violin lick in the opening bars (there are violin cadenzas in all three movements), his sonata is rife with allusions to *le jazz hot*, especially Gershwin's concert music. The outer movements are propelled by the strutting, swinging, syncopated rhythms of ragtime, cakewalk, and Charleston, and hint at Tin Pan Alley songs, stride piano playing, even Latin music, while the bluesy slow movement features a recurring motif (a sequence of descending, parallel dominant-seventh chords) that is straight out of *Rhapsody in Blue*.

Notes by Kevin Bazzana

Piano Trio in G Minor, op.15

BEDŘICH SMETANA

Born in Leitomischl, Czechoslovakia, 1824

Died in Prague, 1884

Smetana, considered by many to be the founder of Czech music, is best known for his dramatic works, in particular his operas *The Bartered Bride* and *The Kiss*. The story of Smetana's life is a tragic one, from the many children he lost, to the onset of deafness later in life, to the relative obscurity he suffered as a composer (many of his works were never performed during his lifetime). He was, however, sadly mourned by musicians and composers who knew him, including Franz Liszt, who proclaimed Smetana "a genius" upon hearing of his death. His oeuvre consists largely of operas and piano music, though he also composed a fair number of symphonic works.

The Piano Trio in G minor was composed in 1855. The year before, Smetana's daughter Gabriela had died. In September of 1855, his eldest daughter Bedřiska died from scarlet fe-

ver. Bedřiska, a musically talented young girl, was Smetana's favourite, his "angel," and her death cast the composer into despair. Near the end of his life, he recalled the painful year of her death and the genesis of the Piano Trio, writing: "The loss of my eldest daughter, an extraordinarily gifted child, inspired me to compose my chamber work in 1855." Indeed, every measure of the Piano Trio bears witness to Smetana's grief, from the mournful opening solo violin recitative, to the funeral march of the second movement, to the resignation of the final movement. The work juxtaposes sorrow with joyful remembrances, as Smetana recalls painful yet warm memories. Much of the work features chromatic harmonies in a contrapuntal texture, creating a dark, gloomy mood; the work ends, however, with a shift from minor to major in the final measures, perhaps implying that Smetana has somehow managed to triumph over his grief and has accepted that life must go on.

Smetana's daughter Katerina was born the same autumn of the Piano Trio. The following year, she too died. *Notes by Alex Carpenter*

Meet the Artists

A much sought after artist, **Shauna Rolston** has been captivating audiences and critics around the world since she first began to display her gifts at the age of 2. Hailed by the press as one of the leading cellists of her generation, Shauna possesses a unique blend of star quality, masterful technique and a commanding intensity of expression.

Since making a spectacular Town Hall, New York debut at the age of 16, Shauna performs regularly on four continents, appearing in recital and concerto engagements in Tokyo, Seoul, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Sao Paulo, Montreal, Toronto, New York, San Diego, Washington, St. Louis, Denver, London, Paris, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Budapest and Rome. An enthusiastic advocate and performer of contemporary music, Ms. Rolston has given the North American premiere of Gavin Bryar's concerto "Farewell to Philosophy," Rolf Wallin's "Ground" for solo cello and strings, Krzysztof Penderecki's Sextet for violin, viola, cello, piano, clarinet and horn, as well as the Canadian premiere of "Kai," a work for solo cello and 18 instruments by Mark Anthony

Turnage. Shauna has also given the world premieres of an astounding number of works written for her. Upcoming commissions include a concerto by Doug Schmidt with the Vancouver Symphony, a concerto for cello and chamber orchestra by Larysa Kuzmenko, a double concerto for cello and flute by Karen Tanaka, another double concerto for cello and flute by Ron Royer, a duo for flute and cello by Jim Hiscott, and a piece for solo cello and tape by Lusiana Lukman. In the coming months, Shauna's recital and concerto engagements will take her to China, Taiwan, Israel, Turkey, Poland, Finland, Italy, France, the Czech Republic, Puerto Rico, Canada and the United States. On November 22, Shauna will perform "Confessional," the concerto written for her by Christos Hatzis with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra at Massey Hall. This occasion will also mark the launch of her new CD entitled "This is the Colour of My Dreams," dedicated to concert and concert pieces for cello and orchestra written for her by Heather Schmidt, Christos Hatzis, Chan Ka Nin, and Kelly-Marie Murphy.

Shauna Rolston has enjoyed her creative collaborations with John McDermott, Veda Hille, Murray McLaughlan, the Kokoro Dance Company, with members of the Desrosiers Dance Theatre and prima ballerina Evelyn Hart. She also tours as a member of the Gallois Quintet. In 1999, she united with dancer/choreographer Peggy Baker and producer/director Veronica Tennant in the creation of "Words Fail," a work for solo cello and solo dancer with music by Chan Ka Nin. A large scale piece for Shauna and Ms. Baker is scheduled for 2002, with music by John Oswald. Her videos of "Words Fail" and "The smokin' f holes," were recently launched at the "2000 International Moving Pictures Festival" in Toronto. Both can be seen regularly on the Bravo Channel.

In addition to her busy concert and recording career, Shauna Rolston is a passionate and devoted teacher. Much in demand as a guest master class instructor, Shauna is Associate Professor of Music at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music. In the fall of 2001, she was appointed co-director of the summer music program at the Banff Centre for the Arts.

Canadian-born **Scott St. John** captures the attention of the musical world through his riveting and virtuosic performances on violin, viola, and electric/midi violin. This charismatic artist has been praised for his "electric" performances and recitals "brimming with extroverted spirit," still, his exciting talents always serve the music. As the *Pittsburgh Press* has noted, "he is a musician of impeccable taste and natural instincts. He lets the music do the talking." Passionate about twentieth century music, St. John's 2001-2002 season includes Bartok's Second Violin Concerto with the Grand Rapids Symphony, Korngold's Violin Concerto with the Winnipeg Symphony, Berg and Barber Violin Concertos as well as a commissioned double concerto paired with the Brahms Double Concerto in Montreal.

The 2000-01 season included *Bernstein Serenade* concerts in the US and Canada, and Britten's *Violin Concerto* with the Vancouver Symphony. Chamber and recital performances include Bartok's *Contrasts* at Lincoln Center as well as works of Janacek, Messiaen, Takemitsu, and several contemporary Canadian composers. Other significant events of the 2000 sea-

son involved his participation in the Marlboro Music Festival's 50th season and special anniversary concerts on tour, recital and chamber music broadcasts on CBC radio and a tour with the Toronto Symphony, under the baton of Jukka-Pekka Sarasate, his third appearance with them in five years.

In past seasons, Scott St. John has performed on both instruments with Keith Lockhart and the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra and was immediately invited to make his debut with Lockhart and the Boston Pops later that season. Subsequent performances with Lockhart include giving the American premiere of Peter Maxwell Davies' "A Spell for Green Corn". They will work together again on this piece with the Utah Symphony in Fall 2001. Audiences of the Cleveland, Grand Rapids, Philadelphia and National Arts Centre (Ottawa) Orchestras and those of the Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver Symphonies have shared in St. John's obvious joy in performing on violin and/or viola.

Abroad, Scott St. John has appeared with the Bavarian Radio Orchestra, Flemish Radio Orchestra, Lisbon's Gulbenkian Orchestra, the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra, New Zealand Chamber Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic in London and the Hamburg Sinfonia. In 1992, he made his debut in Japan, performing with the late Alexander Schneider, and in recitals in Osaka and Hiroshima. He recently returned to Japan for Gala performances in Tokyo's Casals Hall.

Winner of the 1989 Young Concert Artists Award, St. John made his New York City recital debut to critical acclaim in the 1991 Young Concert Artists Series at the 92nd Street Y. Playing violin, viola and MIDI violin, he made his Washington, DC recital debut in the 1993 Series at the Kennedy Center. In recent seasons, Scott has performed in recital on Ravinia's Rising Stars Series, at Spivey Hall(GA), as well as at Boston's Gardner Museum, Pepperdine University(CA), the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, DC's Freer Gallery, the La Jolla Chamber Music Society, the Tilles Center(NY) and Ruth Eckerd Hall(FL). His recital for the University of Wyoming, part of a statewide tour, was featured on NPR's "Performance Today".

An avid chamber musician, Scott St. John frequently performs with the Chamber Music

Society of Lincoln Center(NY), Da Camera of Houston, on nationwide Musicians from Marlboro tours, and at the Seattle, Spoleto, and Vancouver music festivals. European festival engagements include France's Evian Music Festival and the Spoleto Festival in Italy. From 1994-1997 Scott was Founder and Artistic Director of Millennium, a contemporary music ensemble for top young chamber musicians. In 1998, his "Chamber Music Company" launched a new series that included world premieres and multi-media collaborations in New York City's Merkin Hall. Deeply committed to education and outreach, St. John employs his exceptional communication skills to connect with and inspire students and adults alike. Further evidence of his teaching gifts lies in his recent appointment to a prestigious performance/faculty position at the University of Toronto.

Born in London, Ontario, Scott St. John began his violin studies at age three with Richard Lawrence and subsequently worked with Gerard Jarry in Paris and David Cerone of the Cleveland Institute of Music. He studied viola with Ralph Aldrich of the University of Western Ontario and Robert Vernon, principal viola of the Cleveland Orchestra. In 1990, St. John graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music where he studied violin with Jascha Brodsky and Arnold Steinhardt, and chamber music with Felix Galimir. In addition to Young Concert Artists, his many awards include the 1994 Virginia D. Moore Award for Most Promising Young Canadian Artist, Lincoln Center's Martin E. Segal Award, First Prize in the 1987 Alexander Schneider Violin and Viola Competition and a top prize in the 1992 Munich International Violin Competition.

One of Canada's most sought after collaborative pianists, acclaimed for her "vivacious

playing" (Daily Telegraph) and "sparkling clarity" (The Strad) **Lydia Wong** appears regularly with the world's preeminent performers. Venues across the globe from Carnegie Recital Hall in New York City to London's Wigmore Hall have featured her expertise in partnership with such artists as Lorand Fenyves, Frans Helmerson, Rivka Golani, Scott St. John, Shauna Rolston, Patrick Gallois, and Evelyn Hart.

Ms. Wong has performed for networks in North America, Africa and Europe, broadcasts regularly for CBC and can be heard on Marquis Classics and Phoenix Records. She has been a faculty member of the summer music program at the Banff Centre in Alberta, Canada since 1992, joined the faculty of the University of Toronto in 1998 and in the summer of 2001, at the invitation of Music Director Krzysztof Penderecki, performed at the Festival Casals in Puerto Rico.

Winner of Britain's prestigious Ivan Sutton Recital Prize, Ms. Wong has also received numerous awards from the Canada Council and the Floyd Chalmers Fund. She holds the Concert Recital Diploma from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, England where she was a scholarship student, as well as a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Toronto. Her principal teachers have been Paul Berkowitz, Pierre Souvairan and Boris Berlin, and she has worked intensively in master classes with Karl Schnabel, Menahem Pressler, Geoffrey Parsons and Leon Fleisher.

Born in Hong Kong, Ms. Wong emigrated to Canada in 1973 and now makes her home in Toronto with her husband, cellist Simon Fryer.



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QuickQuote

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*VIRGIL THOMSON (1896 - 1989)
American composer, conductor, music critic. Commencement address at the New England Conservatory of Music, 18 May 1986.*